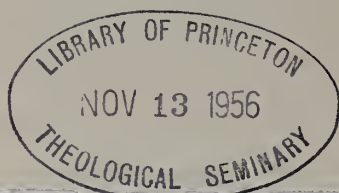


The Late Mission Troubles at Dehra

A Short Review of the Case of
The Rev.D.Herron vs The Rev.J.S.Woodside
in the General Assembly of 1883

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THE LATE MISSION TROUBLES AT DEHRA.

NEW YORK :
C. H. JONES & Co., PRINTERS, 114 FULTON STREET.

1885.

BW7536

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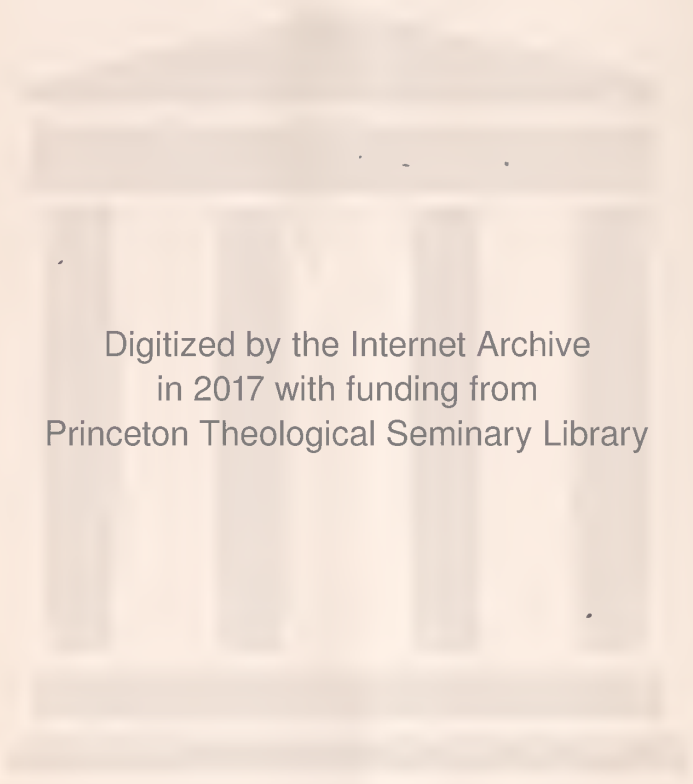
The personal difficulties between two of the Reformed Presbyterian Missionaries at Dehra, who were connected with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, have occupied an unhappy prominence of late years. Their adverse influence on a few of the other Missionaries, and the attempt by some to censure the Board of Foreign Missions and two of its Secretaries on account of these troubles, have also attracted some degree of public attention, having twice come before the General Assembly. All these things are now happily ended, so far as the brethren in India are concerned, by the action of the Synod of North India in December last. Only one vote was given against its decision, in a meeting fully attended by American and Native members. The minutes of the Synod will come before the General Assembly at Cincinnati for review.

While the case is ended in India, attempts are made to keep it open in this country. These may be left to the General Assembly, or to the public opinion of the Church, for settlement. In order to a correct understanding of the subject information is needed. This is not readily accessible, as it is contained in various publications and ecclesiastical proceedings. It has occurred to the writer of these lines, as one who has reluctantly had a considerable acquaintance with these things, that the cause of Missions may be served by a fair and temperate statement of the case, substantially reprinted from a Pamphlet and its Appendix, printed two years ago. To this is now added a brief supplement.

The object of this publication, it will be perceived, is not to keep alive any controversy, but to furnish information that may be useful in various ways, and especially for the correction of erroneous statements. It will give a general view—First, of the case as it came to the knowledge of the public in this country in the General Assembly, of 1883; Second, of its beginning and continuance until lately in India; and Third, brief supplementary notices of some related matters.

The facts and merits of the case, it is believed, can be readily gathered from the following pages.

The Title, as above, is taken from the name of the station in India where the case began.



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A SHORT REVIEW OF THE CASE OF THE REV.
DAVID HERRON AGAINST THE REV. JOHN
S. WOODSIDE IN THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF 1883.

This case appeared before the General Assembly in the form of a "Complaint of Saharanpur Presbytery against the Board of Foreign Missions for reappointing as one of their missionaries in India Mr. John S. Woodside, whom this Presbytery had deposed from the Ministry." We prefer to give it the title by which it is well known to the missionaries of our Church in India, where it has occupied their attention for several years. The case began in personal difficulties between the two brethren, then both respected members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and missionaries of our Board. It gradually swept some of the other missionaries into its wake. It was brought before one of our missions, and before the board, in one form and another. It then reached our General Assembly.

It is formally a complaint of the Covenanter Presbytery. This Presbytery consists of two foreign and three native ministers. The native brethren might well be excused, for obvious reasons, from taking a judicial part in the personal difficulties of their foreign missionaries; and they certainly could have had but slight agency in drawing up this "complaint." Of the two foreign members, one was, and still is, absent from India on a furlough, so that Mr. Herron must be considered the chief, if not the sole agent in preparing this document, one that relates largely to his own share in the proceedings of which it treats. He also must receive the credit of printing "for private use" certain letters which accompanied his complaint, and which in some cases must have been printed without the knowledge or intention of their writers. At any rate, Mr. Herron's side of the case was fully brought before our Assembly by himself and one of his

friends. A letter of Mr. Woodside, in manuscript, gave in much briefer compass his side of the case. These papers were referred to the Standing Committee on Church Polity. There was no reply of the Board to this complaint. It was not informed that any complaint was to be made until Mr. Herron's pamphlet was received, a few days before the meeting of the Assembly. In the latter part of the Assembly's sessions this Committee reported its recommendations of numerous "overtures," one of which, No. 21, related to this complaint, and it was immediately adopted without discussion or remark. The report thus adopted gives a statement of the case as it was viewed by the Committee; and its satisfactory reference of the subject at its close to the Presbytery of Furrukhabad, probably accounted chiefly for the want of consideration of the report in the Assembly.

With this statement our short review might end. But unhappily the action of the Assembly has been construed as its final judgment against Mr. Woodside, so that one of Mr. Herron's personal friends claims that both the Board and the Presbytery should summarily dismiss Mr. Woodside from any connection with them; how impossible it is that such action could be taken will appear further on. Others, and among them a respected writer in the *Presbyterian Review* of July, evidently understands the Assembly's minute as one called for by "the whole mission," and also as condemning the Board. And a respected minister of our Church, in one of our newspapers, refers to the Board's invading the rights of our Presbyteries! As to "the whole mission," the missionaries in India are grouped in three missions, so called. This case was formally confined to one of them. But the members of all the three missions are well informed as to its merits. Some of the members in the mission of which Dehra is a station disapprove of the proceedings of the Presbytery; and in the other missions many members sympathize far more with Mr. Woodside than with Mr. Herron in these painful proceedings.

And as to the Board's being impliedly censured, not only is there no such censure visible, even to those "who read between the lines," but we see not how it can be maintained. The Board acted, as we presume the Presbytery of Furrukhabad also acted,

upon what seemed to be the right theory, and the common practice of our Presbyteries, to which reference will soon be made. Their action may be thought to be erroneous; but if so, it was an error of judgment. It was certainly taken with an impartial and fair purpose to do what was right and best. It was not a case in which they had any personal interest. They endeavored to reach a just and reasonable judgment in matters of some perplexity, and they should have the sympathy rather than the censure of any of their Christian brethren. Further consideration of the case, in a spirit meant to be candid and moderate, would seem to be called for. And especially is such consideration proper, as bearing on principles of ecclesiastical and missionary procedure, which are of permanent, and often of great practical importance. Rightly understood in the beginning, and also in later years, these principles would have prevented this painful case from occurring at all; or if not, then from ever reaching either our Board or our General Assembly. We do not propose, indeed, formally to discuss these principles, but rather to consider the case in a practical way, leaving the principles to such illustration as the facts may give. And here our remarks must relate to the case as it was presented in the General Assembly. Other things connected with it will be found in the Appendix.

It will be evident from the foregoing statement of the case that the action reached by the Assembly was essentially that of its Standing Committee. It may well be doubted whether most members of the House fully understood the merits of the subject. But no reflection is here intended by any means on the action of the Committee. It was composed of brethren beloved, and their consideration of the subject was certainly impartial, and was intended to be so far complete as to warrant the conclusion to which they came. But with twenty-four overtures in hand, and with the duties which such prominent men had to fulfill in the Assembly, how could the Committee give full consideration to a case at once so complex, so depending on records and events of the past, and so *large* in its offered testimony of recent occurrences? It was simply a thing beyond their power. The Board and its Secretaries had already spent more time on the case than any Standing Committee could usually give, and their consideration of it was dispassionate, impersonal, entirely fair, as all who know

them will certainly concede; and yet how far was their course of action from proving satisfactory to some of the brethren on the ground, let Mr. Herron's pamphlets bear witness. Better would it have been for the Assembly, if indeed the time had come, to have placed the case in the hands of a Special Committee composed, not of better men, but of men not required to consider twenty overtures besides. Better still would it have been, as we cannot but think, to have waited until the case came before the Assembly by appeal, or on a review of the records of the Synod of India.

As to the report of the Standing Committee:

1. It sets out on a theory which, in fact, has no foundation—the basis of “an agreement . . . entered into years ago,” . . . “by which it is implied that both by agreement and comity, the judicial decisions of the Presbyteries of said Reformed Presbyterian Church, touching the ecclesiastical standing of their ministers, should receive the respect from our Presbyteries due to like decisions of one another.” The use of the word “implied” is to be noted; but it does not materially change the sense. What is fairly implied among Christian people has equal force with what is asserted. This, then, is substantially an agreement of ecclesiastical correspondence.

Now the right to establish such correspondence with other Churches is reserved to the General Assembly. [Form of Government, Ch. xii., Sec. 5.] The minutes of the General Assembly show that two attempts were made to form such correspondence with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, one in 1825, the other in 1847; but both were fruitless. The first effort was indefinitely postponed by the Reformed Presbyterian Church; the second appears to have received no reply from that body. “The subject disappeared from the minutes.” [Dr. Baird's Digest.] Corresponding members from the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were received by the O. S. General Assembly for two or three years at a later period, but this intercourse ceased several years before the Reunion, and it did not seem to rest on any formal agreement, such as exists with the Reformed Dutch Church and other Churches. As the General Assembly had no such agreement, neither had the Board. It agreed to send out certain Reformed Presbyterian ministers as mission-

aries, but that was all; it entered into no ecclesiastical relations with their church courts. Not a trace of such agreement is found in the Board's minutes, but there are references to great unwillingness to continue the arrangement of sending out such brethren. Some of the ablest men in the Board expressed their grave doubts, and gave their votes against this plan of joint missionary action, at each time, when the last two Reformed Presbyterian missionaries were sent out; not for any personal reasons, but for the conviction that there ought to be only one directing authority, and that union in missionary work abroad ought to follow, and not precede, ecclesiastical union at home. They were wise men.

The practical result of this arrangement, as adopted by the Board, was to leave the church organizations of the R. P. missionaries to themselves. Their acts would receive all the respect which the righteousness of such acts could claim—deference cordially rendered, and never withholden except for reasons regarded as sufficient. This is the theory of our relations to several other denominations of our Christian brethren; fortunately for them and for us, no effort has been made to form any ecclesiastical union in missionary work with them, excepting always what is imperative on us all in the Golden Rule. Now as the Dehra case stands, an ecclesiastical "agreement" is the corner-stone of the Committee's report. This being removed, does not the minute itself fall to the ground? But let us next consider—

2. What the righteousness of the Saharanpur Presbytery's proceedings and action in Mr. Woodside's case required the Board or the Church to do? Conceding cheerfully that the same respect should be shown to the acts of this Presbytery as to those of one of our own Presbyteries, other things being equal, we must yet maintain that in this Herron-Woodside case other things were not by any means equal. (1) The Presbytery had long been an independent body. It could take whatever judicial action it chose, without any redress if its acts were wrong and oppressive. There was no appeal whatever from its decision. In this respect it differed greatly from our Presbyteries. (2) It took its proceedings against Mr. Woodside long after he had withdrawn from its jurisdiction. To this question of jurisdiction we shall return further on (3) Its record does not show that previous to

the trial any private or personal conference with Mr. Woodside had been taken or sought. And (4) as a court, its two foreign members had long been bitterly alienated from their co-Presbyter, and two at least of the foreign ministers who were called in as "consultative members," and who took an active part in the proceedings, though not voting, had also been strongly opposed to him. Thus four out of six of his judges were disqualified for the part they took in this one-sided trial. In these important respects the proceedings of this Presbytery could not command the confidence of the Christian public. Certainly no minister of our Church would be willing to be tried before such judges, in any court, and surely not in a court from whose decision there was no appeal. Nor can we believe that any Presbytery of our Church would consent to sit in judgment on one of its members in such circumstances.

We are told, indeed, that "the Board must not *invade* the rights of the Presbytery." Our reply is given above, at least in part. We maintain, further, that the Board did not do so in this case, no more than it invaded the province of the General Assembly in the alleged agreement to establish a correspondence with another Church. It brought no influence to bear on the Presbytery; it took no part in its proceedings, directly or indirectly; it knew nothing of them, indeed, until after they were taken; in short, it let the Presbytery alone. But it did refuse to be *governed* by its action. The distinction between invading an independent Presbytery's province and being absolutely controlled by its action is marked. The Board could not consent to either. Indeed, the Board has never from the beginning interfered with the rights of Presbyteries, either directly or indirectly; and that it has not done so now, the truth shows.

3. The Committee's report does not refer to the fact that Mr. Woodside had withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Saharanpur nearly two years before the trial took place. Of course, therefore, he refused to be a party to its proceedings. When he declined its jurisdiction there were no charges on its records of any kind against him. Mr. Herron admits this fact, but lays stress on his being *chargeable* with various things—an argument which no court would admit as a reason for a criminal verdict, and one which our Book does not recognize. [Book of

Discipline, ch. v.] Mr. Herron also refers to the Presbytery's having given as a reason for not accepting his withdrawal that he was then pastor of one of its churches; but if no charges were on record, a minister's having been a pastor when he withdrew is not regarded by our Church as a reason for ecclesiastical discipline; striking his name from our roll is considered sufficient. A remarkable case of a pastor of a church withdrawing to join another body occurred in the Presbytery of New York, when such men as Drs. Phillips, Spring, Krebs, and others of like standing, took a part in the proceedings; the decision was unanimous to exercise no church discipline, excepting simply the removing from the roll the name of the seceding minister. Mr. Herron's statement that his co-Presbyter purposed to do certain wrong things, and therefore the Presbytery must refuse to accept his declination, can only be regarded in judicial proceedings as a mere surmise. It is one, moreover, which subsequent events have disproved. Without going further into such details, the reader will regard one thing as certain—that Mr. Woodside withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Presbytery when no charges were pending against him. That he did not immediately apply to one of our Presbyteries for admission was probably owing to the fact, that some of the members of the Presbytery, in whose bounds he resided, had taken a warm part against him in this painful controversy.

Now, the Board, as such, could not take any action on the ecclesiastical merits of the case, but it could and did know the fact that Mr. Woodside had declined the jurisdiction of the Presbytery in an orderly way. The further fact had to be considered by the Board that his disconnection from its service was for a reason not ecclesiastical, and that it was contingent, depending on his course. [See its minute, page 19, *infra*.] In fact, it never was carried into effect. He appeared before the Financial Committee of the Board and made satisfactory explanations. His being replaced in his standing was, therefore, the right thing, so far as the Board was concerned; or his reappointment, as it is commonly called, was in regular order. As he had become an Independent minister, for the time being, it was right also for the Board to condition its action on his being received by one of our Presbyteries. His being so received was not only thus necessary

to his complete reappointment by the Board, but it was a wise ordering for all parties. It provided a regular and fair way of proceeding by an impartial court, whose decision would be open to appeal, so that whatever were the merits or the demerits of the various charges made against him, they could be so examined as to secure a decision that would have the confidence of all good men. And as in the case of the Presbytery of Saharanpur, so in that of Furrukhabad, the Board and its executive officers exerted no influence to control its proceedings or its action—none whatever. This has been officially stated by the Presbytery, of its own accord.

It is needless to consider in this review the action of our Presbytery of Furrukhabad. It undoubtedly possessed full knowledge of the case from first to last, and nobody will question the fairness and thoroughness of its proceedings. It received Mr. Woodside in a regular way as one of its members. Thus he became a minister of our Church, and as such he has been engaged in the regular work of the ministry in its bounds for over a year. His work has had tokens of the divine approval in the receiving of hopeful converts to the communion of the church.

It is not deemed needful to discuss the question here whether the Board, and afterwards the Presbytery of Furrukhabad, rightly construed the effect of declining the jurisdiction of his Presbytery by a minister of another Church, and applying to one of our Presbyteries for admission. The question is one for the Presbytery in the first instance, its action being of course subject to appeal or review. In rare cases ministers have declined our jurisdiction, and we let them go. In cases more numerous ministers from other bodies have applied to our Presbyteries for admission, not unfrequently without letters of dismission—notably in the case of Episcopal ministers, and they have been cordially received after careful examination. Cases of both kinds are reported in our Digests—in which the General Assembly took suitable action, judging of each case on its own merits. That is all that need be asked for in this instance.

The Presbytery of Furrukhabad is placed by the Assembly's action in a position of difficulty. Its members, loyal to the Church, will no doubt conform to the direction given—to reconsider their action, and proceed according to the Constitution.

They will do this on the ground of obedience to our highest court; but they will probably regret that this direction was given, without the proceedings of the Presbytery and the reasons for their action having been laid before the Assembly. Indeed it looks as if the Presbytery had been censured without a hearing. Moreover, the Presbytery, as we understand, was largely influenced by the theory stated above as to the effect of a minister's declining the jurisdiction of his former church when no charges were pending against him. The Presbytery of Furrukhabad did not regard Mr. Woodside as at all a member of the Presbytery of Saharanpur; and it acted upon its own convictions of duty as to other matters, in a regular way. The Board had previously been influenced by the same theory. It is a theory that is often recognized by our lower church courts; and we think it has never been condemned by our General Assembly. It is remarkable that the Standing Committee made no reference to it. If the Committee could have seen the way clear to advert to this ground of action by the Presbytery, even though not favoring it, and if it could further have regarded the action of the Presbytery as sufficiently in accordance with church order, *de facto*, to justify deferring a final decision until the minutes of the Synod could be laid before the Assembly, in regular course or by appeal, we cannot but think the delay would have been judicious, and beneficial to all parties. We are sure, however, that no member of the Committee intended to express any unkind feeling towards the Presbytery.

The Presbytery is not a large one, but it is composed of some of our best ministers—of course not including Mr. Woodside at present. They are men of marked ability, and are held in warm esteem as men of true missionary devotedness. Though, happily for them, inexperienced in church controversies, we may expect that through the guidance of wisdom from on high their course of action will be satisfactory to the Church. They will, we may suppose, state the reasons of their action in receiving Mr. Woodside as one of their members; accept the Assembly's decision as a matter of Church order; and then proceed according to the Standards. . . . Some good way of complying with the directions of the General Assembly, we may hope, will be made apparent.

NEW YORK, *August*, 1883.

APPENDIX.

The preceding pages relate to the case of Messrs. Herron and Woodside as it was dealt with in the General Assembly. Besides the questions of jurisdiction and deposing from the ministry, to which the Committee on Church Polity restricted its report, there were other grave matters referred to in Mr. Herron's "Complaint," which it is not perceived how the Assembly could take up in a satisfactory way. These were contained in the complaint, and in printed letters accompanying it, but were further stated to many persons by two of the missionaries—one a co-Presbyter of Mr. Herron, the other his special friend, who were on visits to this country, one last year and the other the year before. Many things in these letters and statements were intended to confirm the action of the Presbytery of Saharanpur, and were severe in their bearing on the Board of Foreign Missions and some of its executive officers.

As showing the nature and the erroneousness of these allegations, it is deemed expedient to append some statements of facts and reasons. These will also tend to vindicate the course pursued by the Board. In some particulars this Appendix includes brief remarks previously printed.

MESSRS. HERRON AND WOODSIDE.

As Plaintiff and Defendant—we print the names of these brethren in this order, though Mr. Woodside is the older missionary. He went to India in 1848; Mr. Herron, in 1855. They were both ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, and members of the Lodia Mission, India; both are married men, having very estimable families, and both were residents of Dehra during the time of these troubles. They may be described as men differing in temperament. The former is cool, and capable of saying cutting things in a quiet way, as his printed

letters show; the latter is impulsive and quick-tempered, and also hasty in action. They were both held in respect by the other members of the Mission and by the Board. The writer has little knowledge of the earlier stages of their sad disagreement; he was not in the counsels of either at any time of its progress, but he always shared for them both the feelings of Christian regard in which they were held by their missionary brethren. It is a reason of surprise, as well as sorrow, that brethren who had lived together in peace for so many years, should at length become so sadly alienated from each other.

THE GREAT MISDEED.

In 1876 a great outrage occurred between these two men, in which Mr. Woodside was the aggressor under great provocation. What passed between them is known only to God and themselves; no witnesses were present. Mr. Herron has published a statement of the case, throwing the whole blame on Mr. Woodside. We have seen no statement by the latter, but his friends speak of his having been called a liar by Mr. Herron, and so being hurried into acts of violence, greatly wrong, and deeply to be deplored. It is probable that in the dreadful excitement neither could exactly recall what took place. The friends of both must feel grateful that on the next day this wrong was settled by the parties themselves, in the exercise of divine grace—one confessing it, the other forgiving it, and both agreeing to live and labor for Christ amicably in future. Then and there the case was buried, and it should never have been heard of again in this world.

The Board knew nothing of all this for several months afterwards. Then Mr. Herron wrote to one of the Secretaries, mentioning the case. This led to inquiries addressed to the Mission, and at a general meeting full statements were made by both men, in the midst of deep feelings of sorrow in the hearts of all. Again was grace magnified in the settlement of the whole painful trouble, and the Mission sent a request to the Board that no further steps should be taken in regard to it. Accordingly the Board did not deem it expedient to reopen a case, which seemed to have been settled by themselves and the Mission.

But, alas, a third time it reappears in Mr Herron's dreadful affidavit—leaving now a distressing idea of his unforgiving spirit. Some of our friends have said, why did not the Board dismiss a missionary who could commit such an assault on a brother missionary? Others have said, why did the Board retain as a missionary one who has shown such feelings of revenge? One of our prominent ministers expressed the opinion that both of them should have been dismissed from the service of the Board.

But the Lord did not dismiss Peter from his service after his dreadful fall, nor did Peter's brethren set themselves against him. Besides, there were questions of church discipline to be considered—not within the province of the Board. At any rate a Missionary Board should be slow to resort to extreme measures, and the hope should not readily be abandoned that both these brethren would yet be enabled to forgive each other and to live in unqualified devotedness to the great object which took them to India.

ALLEGATION OF DISHONESTY.

In reference to the charge of "dishonesty," it is due to Mr. Woodside to state that some rumors of this kind, from whatsoever source emanating, were referred by the Board to an able Committee of Missionaries, and, upon their examination, Mr. Woodside was acquitted. While referring to his not being sufficiently prompt and careful in the settlement of his accounts with Mr. Herron, still the Committee does "not find anything which at all impugns his integrity." This report was made to the Board after an extended and exhaustive examination, signed by the three members of the Committee, Rev. Drs. Brodhead and Morrison, and Rev. R. Thackwell, Dehra, April 20th, 1878.

It is greatly to be regretted that the closing lines of the Committee's report could not have received greater fulfillment, when they say: "The Committee ventures the hope that this satisfactory adjustment of the long-standing accounts between these brethren may serve to remove all alienation, and conduce to the mutual good-will and brotherly feeling which should characterize those who are engaged in the Lord's work."

ACTION OF THE LODIANA MISSION.

The two preceding matters were well known to the members of the Lodiana Mission. It is worthy of note that when the Mission, January 2, 1879, took its first action against Mr. Woodside, it did not refer to either of these things, but specified "Various Secularities," and little missionary work, as stated in its minute—as follows:

"Resolved, That in accepting the reasons assigned by Mr. Woodside a few days ago for continuing, during the present year, in the Directorship of the Dehra Doon Tea Company, the mission did not intend to express approval of the various secularities outside of the mission he is reputed to have been long engaged in. On the contrary, we think that every missionary who allows himself to be much engaged in such things, compromises his position as a missionary, and forfeits his claim for pecuniary support, on the Society or Board whose commission

he holds; and considering how little direct missionary work (so far as we have been able to learn from his reports, or otherwise) Mr. Woodside has even attempted since his return from America, without going further back than that, we are compelled to raise the question whether his connection with the mission is not a mistake; and we seriously recommend to the consideration, both of himself and the Board, whether this connection ought not to terminate.

"This we do with the greatest reluctance; partly because the personal feelings of most of us towards Mr. Woodside would lead us to desire his continuance among us, and partly because we shrink from doing any thing which might pain Mrs. Woodside or Miss Jane Woodside, both of whom we hold in the highest esteem. Nevertheless, we feel that fidelity to the Board, and to the cause we represent, demands such action."

The writer does not know what "secularities" are here referred to. They probably include two things—one of which deserves a remark here, and the other will be noticed in the next paragraph. Mr. Woodside's relation to the Tea Company is specified in the minute. We suppose that this resulted from his previous effort to form "the Hope Town" settlement. His object in this was to secure a large tract of land, on which native Christians might provide their own support. Losing everything by losing caste on becoming Christians, and finding it extremely difficult to engage in any business, their situation is one that calls for great sympathy. Mr. Woodside's proposed way of supplying the means of self-support, by their own industry in the cultivation of land, was no new scheme. It had been considered by friends of missions, and carried into practical effect in some cases—notably by the Rev. Mr. Sheshadri, whose visit to this country will be remembered by many, and who is still conducting a measure of this kind, as a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland. But Mr. Woodside's plan was formed on too large a scale for the pecuniary means at his command; and as he had purchased the land, it became necessary to dispose of it, and it was bought by the Tea Company, with the understanding that he should aid for a time in settling its plans. His sanguine expectations of benefit to the native Christians, though not fulfilled as at first devised, might yet as it was hoped be partly realized. The charge of this measure probably took too much of his time, but we believe that those who are most unfriendly to him do not assert that he made money by this "secularity."

ACTION OF THE BOARD.

The minute of the Mission, cited above, came before the Board in regular routine for its approval. Thereupon the Board adopted the following Minute, October 13, 1879:

"The minute of the Lodiana Mission respecting the Rev. John S. Woodside, one of the members of the Mission, under date of January 2, 1879 (see printed minutes of the Mission on file in the Mission House, pages 34, 35), was laid before the Board, and certain letters from Mr. Woodside and Dr. Morrison on the same subject. After consideration the Board agreed,

"That, while giving to the Mission full credit for the purpose of doing what was right in the case, yet as its minute show no record of previous personal conference with Mr. Woodside, no charges tabled against him, nor any previous notice to him of the proposed minute; and no proofs sustaining this minute, therefore the Board is unable to take any action in the case, beyond expressing its great regret that such difficulties should seem to exist as to call for the resolution adopted by brethren engaged in the missionary work concerning one of their number.

"It was further agreed, that as this result is reached in view of the record contained in the minute itself of the Lodiana Mission, it is therefore needless to read and consider the letters of Messrs. Woodside and Morrison, D.D., relating to the subject.

"The Board took into consideration the request of Rev. John S. Woodside, that he should be stationed at Dehra and transferred to the Furrukhabad Mission as stated in his letters of—— and August 2d. It was agreed that it is inexpedient to place Mr. Woodside at Dehra; but his request to be transferred to the Furrukhabad Mission was granted, with the understanding that he is then to become a member of the Furrukhabad or the Allahabad Presbytery.

"It was further agreed, referring to the Minutes of the Board of April 14, 1879, in regard to the transfer of certain property without reserve by Rev. John S. Woodside, which transfer, the Board is informed, has not yet been made by him, that the Board must insist on this transfer being made without longer delay; and that, if this direction be not complied with, the Board must terminate its connection with him. And it hereby directs, in this case, the Treasurer of the Lodiana Mission to make no further payments for salary or other purposes on his account.

"And the Board agreed to record its great regret at the necessity of taking this action towards one so long in its service as a missionary, and its sincere hope that the case may be satisfactorily adjusted."

The part of this minute which refers to the action of the Lodiana Mission will surely be approved by all who are acquainted with our Church Standards—see Book of Discipline, ch. v. Though neither the Mission nor the Board has ecclesiastical jurisdiction in a case which involves the character and continuance in office of a minister of the gospel, yet both are bound to have respect to the principles which govern the case in whatever action or non-action they might take.

But the latter part of the Board's minute relates to another matter, which we suppose was classed among "the secularities," though the reason of the minute rested on quite different ground. As this matter between the Board and Mr. Woodside has been satisfactorily settled, it is not deemed needful to enter into the details of the subject.

In justice to him, however, it should be stated that he claimed, in taking certain titles to properties, to have acted under directions from a gentleman in this country, of the R. P. Church, who was entitled to his respect, however much mistaken this gentleman was; and in justice to the Board it may be stated that its action, first and last, was taken in its own line as a matter of missionary superintendence, and not as exercising any ecclesiastical functions. The Board was not indifferent to these charges; it deplored them, whether true or false, and believed that they ought to be investigated in the right way. But they were matters which required the action of church courts; and partly to secure a full and fair examination of these allegations of evil-doing, if need be, and partly in compliance with its own rule as to Presbyterian connection, Mr. Woodside having become an Independent minister, the Board made his reappointment subject to his being received by one of our Presbyteries. According to its usage in other cases, no special recommendation of a Presbytery was required of one who had already been in its service; but, in the circumstances, his being received by a Presbytery would be also an ample recommendation. If we are correctly informed, such a recommendation if called for would be given with warm goodwill at any time by the Presbytery of Furrukhabad, of which he is now a member.

THE PRESBYTERY OF SAHARANPUR AND ITS PROCEEDINGS.

In the order of dates, the next thing to be considered would be the course pursued by this body. This has been discussed already, however, in this pamphlet, and calls for no further remark here on its general merits. As showing the animus of some of Mr. Woodside's judges, particular incidents might be mentioned. Prior to his trial one of his judges repeatedly referred to him as "that wicked man." Two of them, also prior to the trial, refused in Mr. Herron's absence the request of a retired General of the British army, resident with his family at Dehra, for the use of our chapel at that station on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. The reason assigned for this refusal was that the service was to be conducted by Mr. Woodside. This singular incident suggests, contrary to the array of local opinion in some of the letters, that after all there were persons of social position who held Mr. Woodside in respect and confidence. It may be further noted,

as a singular phase of the proceedings in the Presbytery that some of the members appear to have acted both as witnesses and as judges!

THE NATIVE PRESBYTERS.

The connection of the native brethren with the proceedings in Presbytery has been amply described in Mr. Herron's pamphlets. As to these brethren, no disparagement is intended when the opinion is expressed, that they should not be expected to take a part in settling officially personal difficulties between the foreign missionaries. The writer of these lines has always maintained their full standing and rights in Presbyteries, but they may well waive the exercise of some of these rights in some cases. Asking to be excused from taking part in some proceedings is not uncommon amongst us here, and implies no reflection on any man's standing. Moreover, as to the native members, it is stated that they not only were not informed as to some important matters until at or near the meeting of the Presbytery, but that then they heard only one side of the case. It is indeed lamentable to be told that these partisan pamphlets have been sent to other native ministers of our Church in India.

SUNDRY CRITICISMS.

It is no part of the writer's purpose to refer to all of the criticisms which this painful case has brought before the public. Indeed, he has been anxious to enter but little into these details—leaving them to be considered by the proper tribunals, and by the Judge of all. Remembering the infirmity of human nature at its best estate, the temptations and risks of disagreement in the small company usually living at a missionary station, the proper zeal of each missionary for his own field and work, the difficulty of his appreciating the relative claims of different missions which must be considered by the Board at home, it is not surprising that disagreements both personal and general should at times occur on missionary ground. The remedy of them is chiefly grace, even more grace.

Keeping all this in mind, we yet feel constrained to say that some of the writers of letters in one of Mr. Herron's pamphlets have gone too far in their criticisms. We gladly except most of them from remark here, though in some instances they should have had a better knowledge of the case as viewed on all sides. Others go beyond the bounds of propriety. In two cases there is apparently a purpose to show that the Board and one of its Secretaries were hindering the work of our missions in India! And a paragraph to this effect is quoted from a letter of a minister of our Church in this country! A somewhat similar charge

was made by one of these missionaries years ago, while on a visit to this country, and it was refuted at the time with clear proofs.* It had been renewed, and again disproved; and now it reappears. It is a charge that ought to be ruled out of court. Even if true, it is not perceived how it could benefit Mr. Herron. There are singular statements, moreover, about one of the Secretaries wielding too much power over his colleagues, and even controlling the actions of the Board! To those who know the men thus disparaged, such insinuations are absurd, though not less surprising. The neglect by the Board of certain legal advices sent from India merely show that laymen in law, even though ministers in the Church, are not always safe legal counsellors. It ought to have been taken for granted that the action of the Board, in the matters referred to that were of any moment, was taken under the best legal authority. We pass by these criticisms and others quite serious, though easily disproved, but we cannot forbear expressing great regret at the bitter tone of some of these criticising remarks. Some of them were made by one who has since gone to a better country. It is pleasant to believe that his happiness there has been increased, by finding that his brethren were not deserving of his severe censures. In the case of Mr. Herron there is still need of repentance, for he refers to a respected minister of the Presbytery of Philadelphia Central, formerly of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, who with his congregation united with our body, and uses the following terms: "If another minister of Philadelphia, under the influence of Mr. Woodside's explanations and denials, disregarded his ordination vows, and followed an illegal and divisive course, his conduct should not be held up as an example."

SUPPRESSING LETTERS.

One of the criticisms, or charges rather, must not be allowed to pass without denial, viz.: that one of the Secretaries suppressed letters that ought to have been presented to the Board, and that keeping the letters back, he gave the Board his own impressions of their contents, or manipulated them so as to favor Mr. Woodside. Perhaps the authors of this charge did not reflect on its serious nature. But no upright man could be guilty of such wrong and dishonorable conduct under any circumstances, and certainly not in his official trust. This charge is wholly untrue. The letters were all laid before the Board, without any change, without any statement of their contents excepting that they related to personal difficulties, and without any expression of opinion concerning them. It is a cause of deep regret personally to have to deny such a charge. [It should be stated now, 1885,

* See *Record*, 1863—July and August.

that the Mission formally disapproved afterwards the publication of these letters, and that most of the writers expressed their regret for what they wrote, having become satisfied that they were mistaken.]

LIFE BURDENED AND DARKENED FOR YEARS.

The only other example of strange misunderstanding we shall refer to is Mr. Herron's statement, repeated in two of his pamphlets, that for years his life has been "burdened and darkened by the unfriendly action, the persecution, and the injustice of the Board." And the great example of all this began more than twenty years ago, when the Secretary then in charge of the correspondence endeavored to take out of his hands the school for girls in Dehra. This attempt was defeated by the unanimous vote of the two missions then existing; but it led to a correspondence so unpleasant on the part of the Secretary that Mr. Herron had "to break it off." And from that time to this, we are again informed, he has "felt deeply and painfully, especially within the last few years, that the action of the Board has been generally not only unfriendly, but unjust to me personally," and more to the same effect. Well, we shall see. A man ought to have a good memory who speaks confidently of details written so long ago.

Taking "the last few years" first, the only ground apparent for his complaint must consist in the change of opinion as to girls' schools being superintended by ladies rather than men. The Board has schools for girls, some of them higher in grade than the Dehra school, others about the same, in its missions in Syria, Persia, Siam, China, Japan, etc., that are admirably superintended by Christian women; why should not the same kind of superintendence be adopted at Dehra? This question has been considered of late years, but always impersonally, and a decision has been reached in favor of this change, most of the members of the mission, if not all of them, concurring; and a well qualified lady has been appointed for this service. This change was not welcomed by Mr. Herron, but it will permit him to enter on other kinds of missionary work, in which more men are greatly needed. He ought not to set this down as "unjust to him personally." If there is any other ground of complaint lately, apart from the Herron-Woodside case, we cannot imagine what it is.

Now, as to his complaint cherished for twenty-one years, one of the Secretaries, in charge then of the correspondence, had entirely forgotten the subject, and cannot recollect his thinking of it for many years; the other Secretary had never heard of it, so that he could not have "inherited" any unfriendly feeling on this account. Providentially the correspondence that took place

at the time is on file in the Mission House, and it has been lately examined. It shows literally not a line that ought to be unpleasant to any missionary, nor a word that anybody would complain of, so far as the Secretary was concerned; and so far as Mr. Herron was concerned, it must be admitted that one of his letters did contain a few things that were severe, but they were answered on the rule that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." So far as Mr. Herron's statement of his "breaking off" the correspondence is concerned, his letters show that he did nothing of the kind, but he continued to write to the Secretary in as friendly and even as affectionate a way as ever for several years afterwards, even down to the time of his first coming home from India. He speaks of "a few private letters" passing between the Secretary and himself before he "broke off" the correspondence. But neither his own letters on file, nor the copies of letters to him in the office letter-books, nor the office diary, in which the names and dates of all the Secretary's letters on such mission matters are entered, give any evidence of any such "private letters," nor indeed of any other letters than those above mentioned.

As to the subject of this school, Mr. Herron speaks of the Secretary as if he alone were the author of the proposed measure, and makes no reference to its real history, and to the action of the Board in the matter.* It fact, it was a well-devised proposal, suggested and advocated by Dr. and Mrs. Janvier, two of our best missionaries, then at home on a visit, themselves highly qualified for the charge of such a school, and expecting to be aided, if the measure were approved, by a lady of eminent gifts and grace—the late Miss Catharine Beatty, who went to India with them. It contemplated a school of high grade. The Board carefully considered the proposed school, approved of it, and sent it to the mission for its consideration, but taking it almost for granted that it would be welcomed. So far all was regular and hopeful. Unhappily Mr. Herron seemed to have regarded it as "an opposition line" to a girls' school then under the charge of his wife—one of the truly excellent and devoted missionary women—wrote a circular to the missionaries on the subject, of course stating the case from his point of view; whereupon they

* "A letter was read from Mrs. Janvier, of September 6, 1860, on the subject of establishing a school for the higher education of the daughters of native Christians in India. After consideration, the Committee gave its approval in general terms to a measure of this kind, but referred it to the Lodiana and Furrukhabad Missions to consider whether one of the existing orphan girls' asylums could not be enlarged so as to answer this purpose; and if not, then to determine the location of the school and the details of its management, it being understood that its advantages should not be restricted in all cases to native Christian girls."—*Minutes Executive Committee, September 16, 1860.*

withheld their consent, and the case ended, leaving no unfriendly feeling, no feeling, indeed, but that of regret at the Mission House. Miss Beatty afterwards was connected with the school of Mrs. Herron, after her lamented death. The result, as it appears to us now, was only one school instead of two. It may be added that Mr. Herron's circular letter is not found on the Mission House files; it probably was not sent to this country, which is a matter of regret. Its perusal might perhaps modify some things in the foregoing statements, written partly from memory, as now recalled to the case, but written chiefly from the letters on file. The whole correspondence on the subject might well be printed as a "Missionary Paper," teaching some good lessons of experience, but certainly not casting any dark cloud on Mr. Herron, nor impugning the Christian conduct of the Board and its Secretary then in charge. Mr. Herron has been in this country twice since this correspondence took place, and has had repeated conversations with the Secretary, but never referred to this deep injury. How easily might he then have spoken of it, and how easily might he have called attention to it by a kind and Christian letter, which would surely have brought a good letter in reply. How much is it to be regretted that he should have brooded over this matter for all these years, and at length assail the Board and its Secretary, and spread before the Christian public this statement of causeless grief!

In closing these remarks the writer ought to say that in this case, from the beginning, so far as he has had anything to do with it, he has endeavored to do as he would be done by in regard to each one and all of his brethren. He has had no favoritism among the missionaries to gratify, nor any "protégé" to protect. He has not said anything to any one which he was not quite willing that all might hear. He is not conscious of ever having had any but kind feelings towards both of these missionaries. He looks on this controversy as a great calamity to the work of our Church in India. Surely it ought to cease. Why should not both Mr. Woodside and Mr. Herron forgive and try to forget the painful events of the last few years? Why should they not devote all their remaining time and strength, with one accord, as in former days, to the great work of missionary life. Let the one work of saving souls and glorifying Christ our Lord occupy the strength of all our missionaries. Nothing is too hard for God. May He bring our brethren back, chastened by sad experience, to united service for our Saviour and His kingdom!

N O T E.

This pamphlet is printed in 250 copies, but not published. It will be sent to the members of the Board, the missionaries, members of the Assembly's Committee, and others. The writer has always believed in the open consideration of public matters in the work of Christian Missions, excepting in the case of personal things, and especially of personal difficulties, which sometimes occur among good men abroad as well as at home. The less these are made public, the better.

[As this case now stands before the Church, in 1885, it seems expedient to place this pamphlet within reach of any who may wish to see it. It may be ordered from the printers; price 15 cents. See their address on the title page.]

SUPPLEMENT.

1. A good deal of consideration has been given, since the action of the General Assembly in 1883, to the Dehra case, especially in India. It was taken up officially by the Presbytery of Furrukhabad, as directed by the Assembly, and information was sought from all parties, and particularly from members of the Presbytery of Saharanpur. A copy of its minutes or proceedings at the trial of Mr. Woodside, we understand, was specially asked for, but was not received. In due time the Presbytery reached its decision. Then the whole case came before the Synod of North India on review of the minutes of the Presbytery and at its request. After some days spent by the Synod on the subject, the discussions being in both English and Hindustani, the action of the Presbytery was sustained by a large vote; only a few voted in the negative. The Presbytery also requested the General Assembly to revoke the implied censure of that venerable body's proceedings touching the Presbytery in 1883, for reasons assigned. This was cordially and unanimously done by the General Assembly of 1884; which also gave further instructions to the Synod. These were complied with and the subject came for the second time before the Synod in December last, when the action of the Presbytery was again sustained by a vote almost unanimous, only one member voting in the negative. It may be that a few of the members did not vote, regarding it as high time that all controversy should come to an end; but it is understood that the great majority of the members of the Synod concurred in its action. It is gratifying to learn that the proceedings of the Synod were marked by a most Christian spirit.

So far as the result in India is concerned, therefore, Mr. Woodside stands *rectus in ecclesia*, and the policy and proceedings of the Board in this long pending case are approved. It is understood that public opinion in Upper India among religious people generally accords with this action.

2. Previous to the last meeting of the Synod, the three native ministers of the Presbytery of Saharanpur, withdrew from that body, applied to the Presbytery of Lodiana, and were received

by it as members. In seeking this change, so far as is known, they were moved by their own convictions of duty. They are brethren fully capable of judging as to what they ought to do; Mr. Herron's commendation of them may well be accepted as worthy of confidence. They constituted the majority of ministers in the Presbytery, and they might have voted to disband it. They were probably not sufficiently advanced in matters ecclesiastical to have taken this step.

3. Their withdrawing from the Presbytery of Saharanpur revived the question as to its anomalous position, standing independent of all other presbyterial organizations, "at once a Presbytery, a Synod, and a General Assembly," as one of its two American members is said to have described it, a body whose actions admitted of no appeal nor any supervision.

This Presbytery was constituted on the original basis as between the R. P. Synod's Board and the Assembly's Board: First.—That all ecclesiastical matters appertained to the former; and Second.—That all matters of property, to the latter. A stipulated part of the salaries of its missionaries was also to be paid by the former. This understanding was dated back to the days of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, before the Presbytery was organized; and when the missions of the Society were transferred to the Assembly's Board this agreement was continued between the two Boards. There was no agreement between the two Churches, nor any between the two Boards, excepting as above stated. It has been so ordered that three men, then young and active, had much to do with this missionary arrangement; men who are still living; who have in all these years been connected with this joint missionary work in India, one by his noble gifts, all three by earnest labors, who will all confirm the correctness of this statement as to the administrative order of the Saharanpur mission. The Presbytery of that name was long a useful and respected body. But as the years passed, the desire of its members for organic union with the Assembly's missionaries in their Synod increased, until it became a settled opinion that this union would be effected. In the meantime difficulties sprang up at home in the R. P. Synod; then followed the independent position of this Presbytery; and some years later the serious troubles in the Presbytery itself, until at last but two of its ministers remained.

During all its history, the Board of the General Assembly and its executive officers kept perfectly good faith with the Presbytery of Saharanpur, its missionaries, and its friends in this country. It is a sin and a shame to allege any violation of duty in this respect. At length, however, it became evident that some change would have to be made. Two ministers do not constitute a Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church. Neither is it the policy of the Board to support missionaries who are not connected with the church in this country. The financial support of the members for a number of years devolved almost entirely on the Board, though a few R. P. friends continued to send to the Board's treasury their good gifts for the work in India. For such reasons as these the Board a few months ago adopted a Minute, which looks to the two remaining members of this Presbytery becoming connected with the Presbyterian missions on the usual basis. It is hoped that they will both consent to do so. Thereby the Presbytery would cease to exist, to the regret of many, but with submission by its special friends to what seems to be the clear ordering of Providence. Whether as a several work, or as a united work, preferably as a united work in all respects, these special friends will not cease to support with prayer, sympathy and good gifts, the work of so many years.

4. Other things might be referred to, especially the lesson taught that a Missionary Board cannot officially adjudicate the difficulties sometimes occurring abroad, which involve ministerial or personal character. These must be relegated to the Session or the Presbytery. The Board must keep on in its own line as, in the Presbyterian Church, responsible to the General Assembly, and not to the local Presbytery. This is true at home and abroad. But if the Board errs in its action, it will be readily set right by the General Assembly, our controlling authority. It may be added that this Dehra case affords signal testimony to the importance of putting cases of practical difficulty, if need be, in the hands of our church courts. Subjecting the case, in one of its stages, to the action of one of the Presbyteries, was a wise and proper measure, and was expected by the Board as likely to lead to happy consequences, even as the end has so far shown.



5. Deeply to be regretted as are "difficulties" among good men, let them not be exaggerated. They are the result of human infirmity and remaining evil in the heart. The great adversary has also far too much to do with them. But grace reigns. Never before was the prospect of success greater in our missionary work in India than it is to-day. The number of communicants is not yet large, but it is increasing, having about doubled in the last ten years; though for two years it was apparently reduced. Yet as stated in the Annual Reports of those years, this small decrease was caused in one year by statistics not received, and in the second year by the revision of the roll. In the year just ended, though returns from several churches are not given in the statistical reports, yet the Synod could say: "Some of the congregations have had special manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power. This is specially true of the churches at Allahabad, Mainpuri, Lahore, Rawal Pindi, and Lodiana. During the year 165 persons have been received into our churches, but inasmuch as 92 were removed by death and otherwise, the net gain has been 73. The people show greater zeal in the work of the Lord, many churches having reported an increase in the number of voluntary workers among their members." Signal cases of conversion attest the presence of the Spirit of God. Even the system of caste itself will be overruled so as to aid in the conversion of multitudes, as also of isolated cases. The time will soon come, as we may believe, when thousands of converts will confess Christ as their Saviour, even as among the Telooagoos in South India. The leavening influence of the Gospel is widely diffused and of great power in North India. And never before were our missionaries more anxious to see their work prospered from on high. This was very manifest in their remarkable Semi-centennial Conference a few months ago at Lodiana.

Writing in the evening of his ministry, after long observation and study of India missions particularly, the writer of this pamphlet believes that early and great success will crown our work for Christ in that country.

J. C. L.

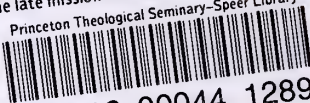
NEW YORK, *May*, 1885.



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